

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 25, 2005

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Minority Member Obey:

As supporters of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, we urge you to appropriate \$140 million in FY2006 for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Program, administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act provides critical resources to runaway and homeless youth in this country. Over the last few years, there has been a dramatic increase in the demand for services. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that in 2003, **40 percent of the youth seeking services from Transitional Living Programs were turned away.** In addition, **4,200 youth were turned away from Basic Center Programs,** which provide emergency shelter and family reunification and preservation services to homeless children and youth between the ages of 12-18. The most basic needs of our nation's children and youth are not being met due to lack of resources.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs now serve over 700,000 youth in all 50 states. RHYA programs' cost-effectiveness saves public dollars. The average cost of serving a youth in a Transitional Living Program is \$8,348, a mere fraction of the public dollars expended on costly juvenile justice systems with average annual costs ranging between \$25,000 – \$55,000 per youth. RHYA programs have also demonstrated a proven track record of raising achievement levels for homeless youth. The last federally-funded evaluation of RHYA programs demonstrated strong outcomes in the areas of education, employment, family strengthening, and personal savings to help youth make a successful transition into a productive adulthood.

We understand that the President's budget allocates \$10 million for Maternity Groups Homes separately from the Transitional Living Program. In order to reduce the administrative costs associated with grant reviews, accountability systems, compliance monitoring, and technical assistance and training, we recommend that Maternity Group Homes be administered under the Transitional Living Programs and suggest consolidating the allocation with the appropriations for TLP.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to working with you to support this important program.

Sincerely,

George Miller

Rep. George Miller

Rubén Hinojosa

Rep. Rubén Hinojosa

Raúl M. Grijalva

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva

Michael Utthede

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